



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Graham Hill Fuel Reduction and Habitat Enhancement		
PROJECT LOCATION	Portions of unsurveyed Rancho Canada del Rincon en el Rio San Lorenzo de Santa Cruz, T10S, R2W, MDBM.	COUNTY	Santa Cruz
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Andrew Hubbs		
ADDRESS	6059 Highway 9 Felton, CA 95018	PHONE	(831) 335-6794

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project will remove brush in shrub dominated areas and create a shaded fuel break in forested areas along portions of Graham Hill Road near the communities of Felton and Scotts Valley. The treated area will be approximately 30 acres in size. Handcrews will remove small diameter trees, shrubs and limbs to reduce continuity of fuels within 15 – 100 feet of Graham Hill Road. The majority of trees less than 10 inches DBH will be removed; limbs of residual trees will be pruned to a height of 6 – 10 feet. Shrub retention will occur within the fuel break, with individual or clumps of shrubs spaced 10 – 30 feet apart. Cut material less than 6 -8 inches in diameter will be chipped, with most of the material hauled off site or piled on-site for burning. Larger material will be left on-site in established turnouts adjacent to the road. Individuals and clumps of acacia are present over approximately five acres of the project area. Within these five acres, all acacia and French broom will be cut and piled on-site for burning. The cut stumps of acacia and broom over one inch in diameter will be treated with herbicide; specimens smaller than this will receive targeted direct foliar application of herbicide. All application will occur with a Licensed Applicator in accordance with the guidelines specified by a licensed Pest Control Advisor (PCA). The PCA's recommendations have been incorporated into project design. It is anticipated the majority of the project will be conducted during the late summer and fall months, with follow-up maintenance occurring periodically, as needed. Most of the project is located in Santa Cruz sandhills habitat and has experienced canopy density increases and subsequent duff and litter accumulation as a result of fire suppression. As a result, the project is intended not only as a way to lessen fire intensity and spread, but to also restore some of the open conditions that previously occurred. This will be accomplished by removing some of the hardwoods and Douglas-fir (generally those 10" DBH or less) and by removing clumps of brush in chaparral dominated areas (favoring the retention of silverleaf manzanita) in order to create openings in the canopy. Following cutting, State Parks staff will rake openings free of accumulated duff and litter to create pockets of exposed mineral soil. This project has been designed with the intent to be consistent with the guidelines developed in the 2004 Sandhills Conservation and Management Plan and has been reviewed and developed in conjunction with DPR Environmental Scientists and a USFWS Biologist.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4
☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):
☐ Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
☐ Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
☐ Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

§15304 Minor Alterations to Land

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

JUL 08 2016

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

The work proposed is a minor alteration to vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is consistent with Categorical Exemption Class 4 - Minor Alterations to Land. No activity is proposed that is listed as a limitation under CCR 15300.2 (a-f).

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality,



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land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit Headquarters, 6059 Highway 9, Felton, CA 95018.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Helge Eng".

Helge Eng, Deputy Director

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

7/7/16

Date